

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Issues facing multi-district counties

History/Background:

Existing Policy. In June 2006, the Kentucky Board of Education requested information on the issues facing counties that contain more than one school district. Forty (40) counties in Kentucky have more than one school district. These counties contain fifty-six (56) independent districts (prior to the Harrodsburg/Mercer County merger). Therefore, the issues identified below apply primarily to these ninety-six (96) districts.

Issues identified include:

1. **Annexations** – KRS 160.045 provides the guidelines for annexing property from an adjacent district in the county. Annexations can have significant impact on districts' educational programs.
2. **Non-resident contracts** – KRS 157.350(4) requires agreement between districts for state funds to follow the student. Some county and independent districts cannot agree on a contract.
3. **Delivery of services** – Larger districts can usually offer a more efficient delivery of services.
4. **Smaller schools/classes** – Parents would rather send their children to smaller schools where they will get more individualized attention.
5. **New school buildings** – Students gravitate toward the newest school buildings.
6. **Program offerings** – Larger districts can offer a greater range of classes.
7. **Community bragging rights** – Long-standing rivalries (athletic and academic) often lead to disputes.
8. **Salary schedules** – Staff gravitate to higher salaries.
9. **Socio-economic factors** – Parents prefer their children attend school with certain other demographic groups.
10. **Work convenience** – Parents want to send their children to the school most convenient to their route to work.

While some of these issues can arise between county districts, they are more prevalent between county and independent districts. The only issue unique to multi-district counties is the ability to annex property.

Superintendents representing districts in multi-district counties will be in attendance to discuss these and other issues and respond to questions.

Attached is data from the 2004-05 school year on these ninety-six (96) districts including average daily attendance, per pupil expenses, dropout rate, free and reduced lunch rate, graduation rate, and retention rate.

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